

Examining the Results of the 2020 Delhi Assembly Elections

***Rajveer Yadav**

Abstract:

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won 62 out of the 70 seats up for election in the Delhi Assembly, handily defeating all other candidates, which did not come as a surprise to the country. People demonstrated their maturity by voting to keep the AAP government in power, putting aside the emotive and national guarantees made by the BJP, as the public continued to support the Delhi government's strong administration.

However, by portraying the AAP as a backer of the Tukde-Tukde gang, the BJP wasted little time in painting the party as being indifferent to national security and sovereignty. The outcome of the Delhi Assembly elections in 2020 may serve as a cornerstone for the AAP's resounding win in secular, issue-based politics. The BJP's politics are not threatened by AAP's strategies, but it won because of its record of good government. Consequently, this research aims to analyse the tone and style of the election campaign and how the AAP easily won. The research helps political parties understand the BJP's defeat and what the Delhi assembly's message is?

Keywords: Campaign, Governance, Ideology, Polarising, Aam Aadmi Party.

Introduction:

Despite being smaller than numerous States in terms of population and size, Delhi, the capital city of India and a Union Territory (UT), is given a great deal of political and media attention. 1.47 crore voters are dispersed throughout the mostly urban national capital area and a few suburbs. The Aam Aadmi Party, BJP, and Congress were scheduled to engage in a three-cornered political battle during the assembly elections. Five years after almost sweeping the Assembly results in 2015, the Aam Aadmi Party, which transitioned from a social movement to a political party less than ten years ago, was looking to position itself on its governance track record. While the Congress aimed to win back the support of the poor and marginalised sections of the UT, the majority of whom had switched allegiance to the AAP in 2015, the BJP was hoping that unlike in Maharashtra, Jharkhand, and Haryana, the hordes of voters who supported it in the Lok Sabha election will not transfer their votes to its competitors.

Nature and significance of Delhi's election campaigning

In Delhi, there were two distinct styles of election campaigning: one promoted neighbourhood politics and pledged to provide daily necessities at affordable prices (development); the other promoted the cause of religious nationalism.

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The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) undoubtedly entered the election campaign with a significant advantage since, according to local media, throughout its five years in power, the party demonstrated its legitimacy by keeping some of its serious pledges. The party has made significant contributions to the fields of health and education. During their rule, the government schools system, which had seen some decline, received a fresh lease of life. Similar to this, this party's trial with mohalla clinics turned into a new paradigm for healthcare reform that other state governments are now emulating. Even Delhi's middle class, which began utilising these facilities, praised these healthcare measures. It was almost hard for other parties to gain ground now that AAP had established a strong basis among the underrepresented groups of voters. The rhetoric of Hindu nationalism did not seem to have any impact on the electorate. By legalising certain illegal colonies, the BJP attempted to win over votes, but it had little success.

The Poorvanchali population, made mostly of immigrants from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, was crucial to the outcome of the Delhi elections. Over the last 25 years, their numbers have increased. Initially, the Hindus who had experienced division and the small business class made up the BJP's foundation of support. The BJP and the Congress both overlooked Poorvanchalis. AAP took advantage of the chance and provided them significant representation.

The BJP did all in its power to change the debate's parameters after falling short on the development agenda. The movements opposing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens were portrayed as anti-Hindu and anti-national to the best of their ability in an effort to garner political mileage. To emphasise the nationalism of the "Modi" brand, the party developed the "tukdetukde gang" brand. Some BJP politicians were vying with one another for the hardline reputation among Hindu nationalists.

For both parties, Shaheen Bagh has evolved into a place of political inspiration. Nobody was aware of the potential winners.

For fear of being quickly accused of being a member of the alleged tukde-tukde gang, Arvind Kejriwal first opted not to talk much or travel there to express unity. The movement had received open backing from the Congress, and the party's officials shared the platform with them.

There were typically four types of voters in Delhi: First, the party cadre, which is wholly loyal to the party and always casts a vote for it. Second, the network voter, who tends to support the party under the influence of the cadre or makes a decision based on issues but is not entirely committed to the party. Thirdly, the influence voter, who is swayed by party officials yet makes decisions based on issues. And last, the floating voter makes a choice during the final two days based on their evaluation of the candidates' speeches.

Political analysts generally agreed that the AAP had the upper hand in terms of speech since it set the development agenda while the opposition worked to show how absurd it was. However, the Delhi elections were seen as a test of the electorate's political awareness and discretion.

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AAP's Outstanding Comeback

As is well known, the Aam Aadmi Party won 62 of the 70 seats up for election in the Delhi Assembly on February 8, 2020, securing a resounding victory. The BJP increased its number of seats from three in 2015 to eight in 2016, while its vote share increased from 32.2% in 2015 to 38.49%. The vote-share of the AAP decreased slightly, from 54.3% to 53.6%. With its vote share falling from 9.7% in 2015 to 4.4%, the Congress came up empty. Many Muslim-populated constituencies, like Okhla, Ballimaran, Babarpur, Chandni Chowk, Seemapuri, and Matia Mahal, saw the AAP easily win seats. Amanatullah Khan of the AAP won the Okhla seat, which includes Shaheen Bagh, with more than 66% of the vote.

But the BJP's hate campaign wasn't completely ineffective. The two parts of Delhi where the BJP won a small number of seats in the most recent Assembly elections saw a number of anti-CAA protests, led mostly by Muslim women.

After listening to all the hateful and scary statements, the huge win of the AAP in the Delhi Assembly elections gave the residents of Delhi some breathing room. However, the AAP's political rhetoric had many different connotations. Arvind Kejriwal, the head of the AAP, said after the party's overwhelming victory: "The people of Delhi have given birth to a new form of politics in the nation, what is termed *kaam ki rajneeti* (the politics of work)...Only this politics can move the country into the 21st century. My friends, this is a triumph for the whole nation of India, not just for Delhi. It is a victory for our Mother India. Hanumanji's day is today, Tuesday. Today, Hanumanji has been kind to Delhi. Thank you, Hanumanji as well. Arvind Kejriwal visited the well-known Hanuman Temple close to Connaught Place the day before the Delhi elections and gave prayers there, it may be noted in this context. On a TV station, he also recited the Hanuman Chalisa. On the day of the vote count, when his party was poised to sweep the Delhi elections, Kejriwal returned to the Temple with his family and party officials.

It was obvious that Arvind Kejriwal was attempting to merge his good administration politics with his soft Hindu politics. He was conversing at the same time in terms of mainstream Hindu religious cults and secular government. Additionally, he was separating himself from the divisive political concerns facing modern India.

Congress Missing

The AAP finished third in the 2019 Lok Sabha and lost to both the BJP and the Congress. In light of this, it is very startling to see that the INC's vote share was dropped to only 4.26 percent and that 63 of its participants failed to even get their deposits back. In order to stop the BJP's ascent in the State, it seems that the INC has purposely taken the calculated risk of not projecting itself as a viable third alternative. It would be naive to assume that suddenly, so many INC top officials couldn't have resisted even if they had wanted to. The AAP profited from the BJP-AAP's bitter rivalry. We'll have to wait and see whether this was a wise choice for the Congress in Delhi going forward.

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Understanding the Delhi BJP Loss

The AAP's accomplishments during the previous five years were given priority by Delhi voters, who rejected the BJP's usual claim of a sectarian agenda in election campaigns. As people have been taking advantage of many of the essential services supplied by the AAP in line with the pledges made during the 2015 elections, the senior leadership of the BJP failed to reject the AAP's excellent administration. The BJP was defeated for the reasons listed below:-

1. Local versus national

Despite the BJP's overwhelming win in the most recent federal elections, less people turned out to vote in the Assembly elections as people started to prioritise local concerns over national ones. With local agendas and national problems putting the AAP and BJP on opposite sides of the election fight for the Delhi Government 2020, the Congress was relegated to a spectator role. The AAP continued to work on voter outreach by promoting its own excellent governance with an emphasis on health, education, transport, social welfare, etc. while the BJP attempted to promote its accomplishments accomplished in the previous five years under PM Narendra Modi. The BJP was defeated in part because of the manner it ran its election campaign, emphasising nationalism and national security while downplaying local concerns handled by the AAP government during the previous five years. In order to accommodate the AAP voters while promoting the 'achievements' of the BJP, such the repeal of Article 370, CAA 2019, Ram Mandir, etc., Muhalla clinics, modernizations of government schools, the installation of wifi, and freebies for power, water, and transportation served as catalysts.

2. Absence of the anti-incumbency factor

Given that seventy percent of the promises made during the 2015 elections proved to be true, the AAP consistently received the highest performance grade based on a variety of independent polls and assessments, leaving the least amount of room for criticism. The AAP's growth model astounded the opposition parties, and Delhi's people discovered how to strategically cast their ballots in line with ratings of performances.

3. Manoj Tiwari vs. Arvind Kejriwal

The absence of the BJP's candidate for chief minister in the face of Arvind Kejriwal's dynamic and popular leadership also contributed to the party's underperformance, as the incumbent C.M. of Delhi had consistently been a front-runner for the position among voters thanks to his simplicity and citizen-friendly demeanour. Even though the BJP's senior leadership made an effort to persuade voters by presenting Narendra Modi as a vibrant leader and highlighting his prior five-year stint as a stalwart and builder of New India, uncertainty surrounding the BJP's chief ministerial candidate caused a number of concerns.

4. The questionable role of the police in Delhi's violence

The Delhi Police's ineffectiveness and prejudice in quelling the rioting and violence that resulted from protests against the recently passed CAA 2019 may also have contributed to the BJP's loss in the Delhi

elections. In dealing with the violence at Jamia, JNU, and other parts of the State, the Delhi Police's credibility has been criticised for being questionable, unrepentant, and distressing. This is because the police were seen as the perpetrators of a number of incidents and only received selective punishment. Despite several accusations being made against them, a sizable number of masked offenders who were accountable for the violence at JNU escaped police attention.

5. Shaheen Bagh Issue Backfire

The Shaheen Bagh protest served as the focal point of polarisation during the BJP's hastily organised campaign for the Delhi elections in an effort to divide voters along racial and religious lines. The BJP suffered a terrible loss as a result of Delhi residents' rejection of the sentimental campaign. The BJP began its campaign to oppose the AAP model of development by disparaging the Shaheen Bagh demonstrators in front of the party's senior officials, including the prime minister and the home minister. Later, a large number of additional lawmakers were sent to Delhi to paint the Shaheen Bagh demonstrators as anti-national, turning the elections there into a conflict between nationalism and anti-nationalism.

The political parties who disagreed with the CAA, such as the AAP and Congress, were directly attacked by the BJP as traitors and national conspirators, urging the electorate to remove Kejriwal from office in Delhi. The BJP proposed the concept of painting the AAP as anti-national to polarise the electorate on nationalist propaganda, seeing this plan as a masterstroke. The Shaheen Bagh protest continued to be a legitimate, nonviolent demonstration against the CAA and had no connection to any political party.

6. Negative effects of VVIP Hate Speech

Given that Delhi voters are politically astute and sane given that they come from all over the nation, the AAP's ability to respond maturely to the hateful and unconstitutional speeches made by the BJP top leadership during the election campaign was crucial in swaying the electorate.

Message from Delhi

- 1) Regional parties are still important figures in Indian politics.
- 2) The BJP has to reconsider its topics and election-related methods rather than focusing on divisive campaigns and national problems.
- 3) If the Congress is to have any real impact on Indian politics, it must determine whether it will act alone or form an alliance with others.
- 4) Ideology is unnecessary if infrastructure is prioritised.
- 5) To awaken people's awareness and help them see the connection between ordinary things in the world and more significant structural problems.

Reflective Ideology

Gandhi's religion of love, compassion, cross-religious sensibilities, and satyagrah as the profound art of resistance against what is immoral and unethical should be engaged with our quest for the spirit of pluralism and spirituality enriched secularism. These issues include the ideology of the might of majoritarianism, militant nationalism, stigmatisation of minorities, and the growing economic

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disempowerment of the poor and the subaltern. Gandhi offers us a glimpse of a future that might help us get beyond Hindutva and the imitation of religion as an identity that breeds hate and division. Rabindranath Tagore's in-depth analyses of the brutality of totalitarian nationalism should also teach us a valuable lesson: worshipping the abstracted nation, which is ultimately an expression of our egos, frequently brutalises consciousness and seriously undermines the values of empathic and compassionate universalism. In other words, non-reflexive nationalism is not always a desirable notion to preserve, as the history of war or the Holocaust demonstrates.

Conclusion

The devastating loss of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is equal in intensity to the remarkable success of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Delhi Assembly election. AAP's second straight win is not an electoral enchantment of a start-up since it has been in power for the previous five years, but rather an affirmation of its track record.

Along the way, the party's founder and Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal, honed a political concoction that proved to be the most effective remedy for the destructive religious polarisation that the BJP has come to support. His administration improved access to water, health care, and particularly education for Delhi's poorest and most vulnerable citizens.

The AAP will need to take a position on the identity problem that has the country taking to the streets in protest if it is to make any kind of national move in the near future. because there is a fine line between comfortable capitulation and principled silence. Being on a precipice of ideological convenience has an obvious danger. Therefore, the AAP must distinguish between methods of prioritising administration and displaying indifferent attitude towards fundamental political problems that have a significant influence on India's future as a secular democratic Republic if it hopes to maintain its standing as a force to be reckoned with.

Finally, the Delhi results show that regional parties will continue to be significant in Indian politics, the BJP will need to revise its platforms and election-related strategies, and the Congress will need to decide whether it wants to play independently or form an alliance with other parties in order to regain ground in areas where it has fallen short.

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